



Guidance Notes for Parents/Carers requesting Leave in Term Time

Schools can only agree a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances and all requests must be made in advance (at least 2 weeks) by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. Schools are then expected to consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. Generally, the Department of Education does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Therefore, any leave taken for the purpose of a holiday is unlikely to be regarded as an exceptional circumstance.

If a parent does not request the leave and it is suspected that the child has been taken on holiday, the parent will be informed in a letter from the school and will be requested to provide evidence to support the reason for the leave of absence.

Where parents have children in more than one school a separate request must be made to each school.

Should the school agree there are exceptional circumstances and grant leave of absence, but the child does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) this absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This will result in a penalty notice being issued.

Should the school decide not to grant leave of absence and parents still take their child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and school will consider referring to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

From 19th August, 2024, the Law has changed in respect of penalty notices, a penalty notice allows parents to discharge an offence by paying a one-off penalty without the matter being referred to court where they could receive fines of hundreds of pounds and a criminal record. Penalty notices can be issued for term time holidays and where children are persistently absent from school.

Please note that a maximum of two penalty notices can be issued in a three-year period. Therefore, should you meet the criteria a third time, you will be prosecuted for the offence of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school.

The local authority advises all Staffordshire Schools that all unauthorised leave should be considered for a penalty notice request or court action.

Additional information is available by visiting:

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/Education-welfare/Attendance.aspx>

Exceptional circumstances

In considering whether any exceptional circumstances apply, the headteacher will consider if the reasons are **rare**, **significant** and **unavoidable**. The headteacher will also take into consideration the factors listed below:

- whether the event for which leave of absence is requested could reasonably take place during school holidays
- levels of attendance and unauthorised absence over the last rolling 12 months
- any leave of absence taken previously
- whether the leave is during the exam period or will result in a failure to meet assessment deadlines

Leave of Absence from School



Name of child / children		Year group/s	
Dates of proposed absence			
First day of absence		Last day of absence	
Reason for Proposed Absence – please provide reasons to support the application including evidence in support of your request <i>(they can only be exceptional circumstances - see overleaf before completing)</i>			
Total number of school days of absence			
I have also applied to _____ School/Academy for leave of absence for _____ (please insert siblings' names)			
Parent's signature		Date	

For school use only			
Current attendance percentage	%	Previous leave checked	Y/N
Last year's attendance percentage	%		
Exceptional circumstance – criteria met? (must be consistent with regulations):			
Authorised by Headteacher	Y / N	Signature	
Absence code to be entered		Date	

We have a shared responsibility to ensure that the law is upheld and that your child achieves to his/her full potential. We look forward to your co-operation.